

A Christmas Stocking

By Bertha Esmond Ridgeley

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CHRISTMAS and the high cost of living do not make a very harmonious combination," observed Mrs. Ralston, in her quiet, patient way.

"I was just thinking of that, mother," replied her married daughter, Eunice Marsh, who sat with her work basket in her lap. Her needle threaded with mending yarn, and rounding one of her husband's stockings at the heel. "There! that is done, and I hope it will pass muster as half respectable pinned up to Aunt Mary's nagel."

Mrs. Ralston sighed, and Eunice did not get any too cheerful. They were lovable, generous souls, and until the past year or two had never known what it was to skimp and watch the corners closely. The mother picked up the stocking Eunice had placed on the table.

"Come to think of it, Eunice," she said, "the son do better than that. Just run up to the storeroom. Here's the key. You'll find father's clothes and things as they were when he died."

The last years of John Ralston's life had been full of anxiety and struggle. There was a mortgage on the old homestead, and at one time it seemed a foreclosure could not be avoided. Then in some way he secured the money to pay it off, and fortunately it was clear of encumbrance when he died. That was just a month after Eunice married Randal Marsh.

Her heart warmed as she thought of the loyal, whole-souled man who had come into her life at a critical time. It had been generally supposed that Randal had some little means, for he was industrious and thrifty, but when Mr. Marsh died Randal stepped into his place, promptly hard working and self-reliant.

The tears fell as Eunice reached the storeroom, and lifted the top of the fancy box she had herself covered, in which her father had been accustomed to store his extra clothing. Randal himself had made the receptacle, and together they had given it to Mr. Ralston on his last birthday. Eunice removed some articles of apparel tenderly and with care, placed them on a chair, and discovered some handkerchiefs and three pairs of stockings rolled up neatly. She took the top pair, unfolded it and with satisfaction noted as it unfolded that it was new and whole.

"Why, what can this be?" she uttered, as an envelope fell from the released folds. Her wonderment increased as she picked it up and found it unsealed and inscribed with a name and a peculiar looking key. Then with staring eyes, breathless, stirred to the depths of her soul, she read:

"After I am gone see that this letter and key are given to Randal Marsh. It has been a secret he made me promise never to divulge, that he gave me money to pay off the mortgage. Poor, noble hearted fellow! he had saved the \$2,000 to build a little home, and gave it freely to benefit us all. Month by month I have saved what I could, and have placed the money in a safety deposit box in the City bank, where there is nearly the amount he gave me."

Eunice with difficulty suppressed a great cry of joy. She could scarcely refrain from rushing downstairs and revealing her marvelous discovery to her mother. As she reflected how much this generous donation would mean to them all, in a transport of happy tears she sobbed forth her love for the worthy helpmate who had so well fulfilled his duty to himself and her family.

Eunice was alive with half-suppressed excitement all that evening. She waited when they had reached Aunt Mary's until her mother and the others had placed their little gifts in the stocking bearing a card with Randal's name. All alone she kissed the precious envelope and slipped it into the stocking.

"A necktie, gloves and a pen knife. That from aunt. Something always useful. A letter too! a card of greeting, too! Why, what does this mean?" spoke Randal Marsh, and read it as they all gathered about the fire place, and then he knew. Unselfish man that he was, he actually identified like a child detected in the revelation of a sleeping secret of years.

"It means that I have the dearest, most noble husband in the world," cried Eunice, her arms about him, her lips raining kisses. "Oh, my brave and true one! And when the year today deserves the blessings of 'this' more than ever!"

His Preference.—"I don't think the coxswain of your crew likes danc'ing." He—"I'm afraid not. He told me he'd sooner steer right men than one woman any day."—Boston Live and Transcript.

RIVERDALE

Mr. and Mrs. O. W. Bauer and children and Mrs. Wm. Bauer visited relatives near Mt. Pleasant Sunday.

Miss Mable Stambaugh returned to Flint Monday after visiting for several days at the home of her parents.

Mrs. Arthur Sprague and children of Ithaca spent the week end with her mother, Mrs. Winters, and her sister, Mrs. Delbert Hicks.

Mr. and Mrs. Clair Going and son spent Sunday north of Elwell, guests of Mr. and Mrs. Lyle Nelson.

Mrs. David Dutt has returned from spending the past four weeks with relatives at Durand.

Mrs. George LaPaugh of near Elwell visited at the home of her sister, Mrs. Chas. Green, Saturday.

Mrs. O. Ferris of Alma spent Friday in Riverdale, a guest of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. VanAlstine.

Jack Mobbo was in Ithaca Sunday. D. D. Snider spent the week end with relatives near Pompeii.

Ernest Sudler spent Wednesday with his parents in Alma.

Mrs. Cora Nunn visited at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Glen Croton, Sunday.

Henry Holland was home from Alma over Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Kellicott visited friends in Alma Saturday.

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Britten spent Sunday with their son, Claude, and wife north of town.

Mr. and Mrs. Orla Mack and children spent Sunday with relatives at Vestaburg.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Belknap and children of Lansing were week end guests of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Belknap, Sr.

Mrs. Henry Wolfgang visited at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Black Friday.

Mr. and Mrs. Treese have moved from the Deane farm to their new residence which they recently built in Vestaburg.

B. C. Wilson of Edmore was a business caller in town Thursday.

Dr. and Mrs. E. M. Highfield were in Alma Tuesday attending the Annual Banquet of the Gratiot-Isabella-Clare Medical Society held at the Wright House.

Mr. and Mrs. Neil VanAlstine, and daughters, Mary and Margaret, and son, Paul, visited relatives near Winn Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. George Guilds were Alma visitors Friday.

Elmer Teft was called to Saranac last week on account of the death of a relative.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Gott and son, south of Vestaburg were Riverdale callers Saturday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. James Fisher were in Alma Thursday.

Mrs. Ross Hallibaugh of Lansing is visiting relatives in this vicinity.

Elmer Blough of Edmore was in town Monday on business.

Wm. Strong of Alma was a Riverdale caller Sunday evening.

Mrs. Flossie Lucas has been visiting friends in Alma the past week.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Schnepf and on, Percy, were Elwell and Alma visitors Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Mobbo and son, Donald, visited friends in Ithaca, on Sunday.

Dr. and Mrs. Norman Brownridge and daughter, Margaret, spent the week end at the David Bush farm in Isabella County.

John Mathews of Shepherd was a business caller in town Monday.

Mr. and Mrs. James Hopkins and children of Alma were guests of Mr. and Mrs. Millard Hopkins, Sunday.

Miss Marguerite Maner of Lansing spent the week end with her parents in Riverdale.

Miss Mary Holland was home from Mt. Pleasant over Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Bywater and Mr. and Mrs. Fred Leiter were Alma visitors Saturday evening.

Mrs. Cora Hudson spent several days last week with relatives at Saginaw.

L. M. Forquer has been confined to his home the past week on account of illness.

Mr. and Mrs. Erskin of near Vestaburg spent Saturday with their daughter, Mrs. Laurel Welch.

Mr. and Mrs. Clair Sturdivant and children spent Sunday with Mrs. John Holland southwest of town.

Mrs. Fred Leiter entertained her sister from Six Lakes last week.

Mrs. Wm. Webb left Tuesday morning for Ann Arbor where she expects to undergo a surgical operation at the University hospital.

Mrs. O. A. Kates of Alma spent Monday in Riverdale a guest of Mrs. E. M. Highfield.

Mr. and Mrs. Orville Welch north east of town visited at the home of their son, Laurel, Sunday.

Mrs. Ruse LaMay visited relatives at Alma and Shepherd Friday.

Richard Hudson of Lansing is visiting his mother, Mrs. Cora Hudson.

Rev. and Mrs. H. R. Strong and daughter, Eloise, visited friends at Elwell Wednesday.

ELY DISTRICT

The school is planning a Christmas program for Friday afternoon, Dec. 22.

Mr. and Mrs. Al Jacobs and Mrs. Eldred of Cedar Springs spent Saturday with their uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. A. P. Nestle.

Maurice Forest of Sumner was a Sunday visitor at the home of his brother, Ed Forest.

Mrs. N. B. Udell enjoyed a visit with her niece from Ann Arbor last Thursday.

Christmas Dinner Will Be Complete

When you have left your order for the Meat.

TURKEYS, GEESE
CHICKENS, DUCKS
PORK, BEEF
FISH and OYSTERS

Give you a wide range of choice at this market. Order early. We give prompt service.

Grover's Market

Phone 55

Free Delivery

A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to You!

We are this year showing the most attractive merchandise it has ever been our pleasure to display to the folks of Alma. Our store, from front to back and from side to side is just one big holiday bazaar. Here you may find suitable and ever-welcome gifts for all members of the family and for all your friends. To men, women and children, no gift is more appropriate or genuinely useful than a toilet article, for instance, and we are happy to offer you all the standard articles of this class at prices which will attract you. Then, there are the Kodaks and Supplies for Kodakers. Of course, there's at least one of your family or your friends who would like a Kodak, or an to keep his prints. We have these supplies at prices you can easily afford. Fountain Pens and Magazine Pens are always in order as gifts. Everyone can find daily use for a good pen or a pencil. We have them separately or in beautiful Christmas gift boxes. And if Dad or Brother needs a new ready and Auto-Strop and other well known makes, and all sorts of good shaving soaps and lotions to go with them. Last, but not least, we have a wonderful assortment of Christmas Candies, both loose and in boxes. Christmas is not Christmas without plenty of Candy, and we urge you to see our stock before making your selection. Naturally, our store is chock full of dandy gifts, we haven't room to mention here. Therefore, you'd better drop in some day and look 'em over. Christmas and New Years Cards are ideal for remembrances of your less intimate friends. They show the spirit and, after all, that's all that matters.

KODAKS
\$2.50
to
\$75.00

EVERSHARP
PENCILS
50c
to \$5.00

FOUNTAIN
PENS
\$1.00
to \$20.00

SAFETY
RAZORS
\$1.00
to \$10.00

TOILET WATER
PERFUMERY
SOAPS
FACE POWDER

CANDY
and
CHOCOLATES

We are also showing a fine line of Christmas and New Years Cards, and can take your order for printing and engraving your name.

WHATEVER YOUR NEEDS, WE SATISFY YOU

CHAS. R. MURPHY

Your Prescription Druggist

SETHTON

Mrs. Clayton Ward received the sad news Monday afternoon of the death of her father at Wheeler.

Glenn Wiley is moving his family to Eagle this week, where he has a trucking job.

Mrs. Andrew Van Beelan motored to Grand Rapids, Sunday to visit her husband who has employment there.

Neva and Orval Roles are on the sick list.

Mrs. H. A. Gardner is at Brighton helping to care for her mother who is very low with no hopes for her recovery.

Several from here attended the home talent play at Middleton, Friday evening, entitled "Aron Slick of Pun Kin Creek" given by the Seniors.

Mrs. Charity Jason has returned from De Witt where she spent several weeks with her daughter.

The Rev. and Mrs. Bates are caring for a tiny baby whose mother is at Brainerd's Hospital receiving treatment.

THE SEASON'S GREETING 1922-1923

At this season of the year my thoughts revert gratefully to my many friends whose confidence and patronage have assisted in my business progress and prestige. To you I extend my heartiest good wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

Faithfully yours,

S. L. BENNETT

General Insurance

Rooms 4-5, Opera House Bldg.—Phone 82

ALMA, MICHIGAN

For Him

Pocket Knives
Lunch Kits
Auto bulbs
Fishing reels
Tackle kits
Cigar trays
Shaving outfits
Hunting coats
Hunting compasses
Hunting knife
Hunting watch
Camp cook stove
Camp canteen
Camp axes
Saws
Handled axes
Vacuum bottles
Set repair tools
Revolvers

For Her

Casseroles
Candle sticks
Vacuum cleaner
Table cutlery
Electric toaster
Fireless cooker
Measuring spoons
Enamelled ware
Sandwich tray
Mixing bowls
Clothes sprinklers
Kitchen ranges
Serving trays
Pocket flash light
Silverware
Manicure sets
Thermos bottles
Electric grills
Carving sets
Tea and table spoons
Knives and forks

For the Kids

Mecano sets
Roller skates
Coaster wagons
Washing sets
Cooking sets
Boxing gloves
Punching bag
Skate shoes
Ice skates
Toy aluminum sets
Baseball goods
Boy Scout wagons
Flexible Flyer sled
Velocipedes
Tricycles
Automobiles
Kiddie Kars
Farm wagons



Gifts of Hardware Bring Happiness

Practical gifts from the HARDWARE store are always appreciated because they're useful, and a useful gift brings pleasure and many pleasant memories of the giver every time the article is used. Here are a few gift suggestions, any one of which will be received with welcome enthusiasm:

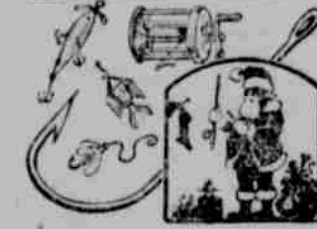
WHEN THE MEN FOLKS HINT ABOUT CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

help them out. For example, say in a casual sort of way, "Saw a peach of an aluminum roaster down at Clapp's the other day. I'd certainly like one of them." Instead of a roaster, of course, you might suggest a percolator, or a toaster, or a waffle iron, or any of the hundred and one articles of kitchen equipment that make your housework easier and pleasanter. You may be sure we have them all at moderate prices.



Does Dad Fish?

Then how about a rod—an extra good one—or one of those unusually fine reels he's been hankering for this long time? If he has these, probably he'd like a new tackle box or some new flies or lures. We can furnish gifts in this line all the way from 50c up.



Wheeled Toys Gladden the Hearts of Girls and Boys

Velocipedes, tricycles, coaster wagons, automobiles, kiddie kars, toy farm wagons—Santa always puts these gifts foremost for girls and boys. They bring health and happiness to the kiddies for many years—yet the cost is small.



Another Big Special Aluminum Sale

9c 69c 99c
Saturday, 9 a. m., Dec. 16, 1922

1200 satisfied customers testified to the value of our previous sale. SALE IS FOR ONE DAY ONLY.

E. C. CLAPP

The Winchester Cash Hardware